

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES SURVEY
SUMMARY OF INFORMATION**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the No Child Left Behind (20 USC 6316 SEC. 1116 (b) E at page 1479) legislation, Local Education Agencies (LEA) shall provide all students enrolled in schools receiving Title 1 funding and identified as in need of improvement, the option to transfer to another public school served by the LEA. In addition, 20 USC 6316 SEC. 1116 (b) (F) at page 1483, the LEA must provide an explanation of the parent's option to transfer their child to another public school or how to obtain supplemental educational services for their child.

In response to these requirements, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released the School Choice and Supplemental Services survey in September, 2002, to ascertain the progress that districts have made in meeting two new key federal mandates: (1) the provision of intra-district public school choice for parents of students attending persistently failing schools, and (2) the provision of supplemental services to Title 1 students to assist them in achieving academic success.

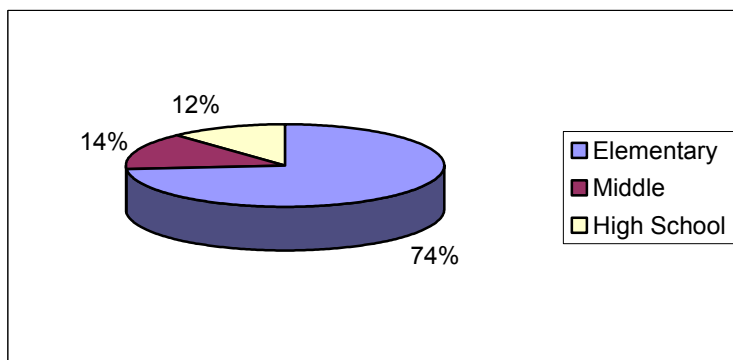
The target population for this survey was the 71 local school districts, including Charter Schools, in the state that have schools identified in need of improvement: 24 in the North, 20 in the Central Region and 27 in the Southern Region. The response rate was 99 percent; only one LEA, LEAP submitted responses too late to be included in the survey.

This summary is based on information received as of November 19, 2002.

STATEWIDE

General: Of the 579 schools in the 71 LEAs throughout the state, including charter schools, 268, or 46 percent are identified as schools in need of improvement or Category I schools. These schools represent 427 elementary schools, 83 middle schools, and 69 high schools.

Category I Schools (46%)



Transfers: Overall, 844 transfer requests were received by 21 LEAs as of September 30, 2002, representing 30 percent of the total number of LEAs with schools in need of improvement:

- 585 for elementary schools
- 72 for middle schools
- 178 for high schools

Of the total 844 requests, 504, or 60 percent, were granted.

The results of questions No. 1 and No. 3 for LEAs to indicate the number of transfer requests received as of 9/30/02 and the number of transfer requests granted as of 9/30/02 are reflected as follows: Statewide, there appears to be a focus on moving students out of lower performing schools at the earliest grade levels.

In this regard, the majority of the transfers requested were for elementary school students, representing 70 percent of the total requests. (The status of the remaining requests needs to be verified.)

Number of Transfers Requested & Granted

	Statewide	North	Central	South
Requested	844	410	268	157
Granted	504 (60%)	107 (26%)	256 (96%)	141 (90%)

The largest number of requests came from elementary schools; requests granted for elementary schools were proportionately lower than for middle or elementary schools:

- 47 percent for elementary schools
- 75 percent for middle schools
- 99 percent for high schools

This might be indicative of a lack of capacity to accommodate transfer requests at the elementary level, or it might indicate that parents are seeking to give their young children the best start in their education, and that they are seeking to ensure their older children have an appropriate education in high school to secure college acceptance, or simply to graduate. In either case, the clear focus is on the youngest and the oldest children in the system of public education with regard to school transfer.

Regionally, the northern and southern parts of the state reflect a pattern of higher transfer requests for elementary school students; whereas, the central regional shows a high rate of transfer requests for high school students.

Number of Transfer Requests

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
North	396	10	4
Central	61	33	174
South	128	29	0

Statewide	585	72	178
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Transfers Denied: Survey results of the status of number of transfers denied by districts as of 9/30/02, question number 2, are inconclusive. Not enough information was provided to determine whether the decision is pending or if the request is still in consideration for denial.

School Capacity: Survey Question #11 - What capacity is available in your district?

Survey results indicate a proactive approach by LEAs/schools to addressing school choice issues. Forty-seven districts, or 66 percent of the total number of number of LEAs in the state with schools in need of improvement, indicated that they are undertaking activities to identify school capacity. This appears to indicate a clear recognition of the new federal mandate under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for intra-district public school choice for students attending persistently failing schools.

However, despite efforts by these districts to address this mandate and identify capacity, a significant number of LEAs indicated that they had “zero” capacity in their schools:

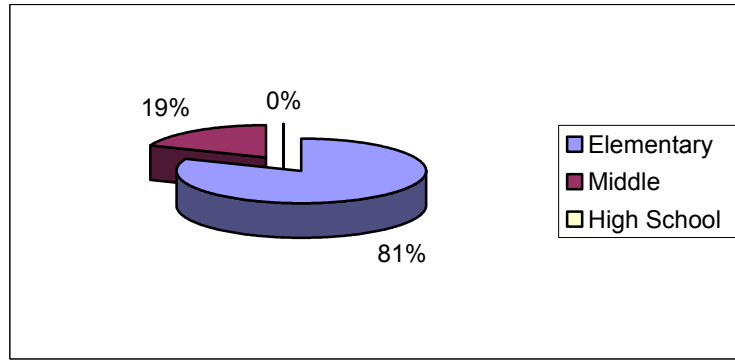
- 33 districts indicated no capacity within elementary schools
- 34 indicated no capacity within middle schools
- 30 districts indicated no capacity within high schools

In light of the fact that the final Title I regulations recently released by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) state that, *lack of capacity* will not relieve a district of the responsibility to provide for intra-district public school choice for students attending persistently failing schools, additional effort to identify capacity at all grade levels and in all districts will be essential.

Supplemental Services: Survey Question # 5- List the top five authorized supplemental service providers currently used in your district to assist students academically, include the name of the provider, contact information and the type of service.

(Important: The Service Providers reported are those currently used by the districts and **are not** derived from a state-approved list.) Consistent with the findings for transfer requests, there appears to be a greater focus on obtaining additional services for students at the earliest grade levels. The lack of requests for supplemental services for high school students might indicate a parental preference for student transfer at the upper grade levels. This might also indicate a belief by parents that transferring to a higher performing school offers the older student the greatest opportunity for more immediate academic success.

Statewide Supplemental Services Request



1,003 requests were made for supplemental services from among the 71 LEAs with schools in need of improvement: 812 requests, or 81 percent of the total, were made for elementary school students, and 191 requests, or 19 percent, were made for middle school students; no requests were made for high school students.

Currently, a wide range of providers are being used by districts with schools in need of improvement to offer supplemental services to Title I students. These include use of over 70 providers whose services are:

- internal LEA staff
- private educational design and testing services
- volunteers; whole school reform model developers
- a variety of non-profit educational related organizations
- county-based associations
- individual private consultants
- State assigned reading coaches and volunteers

Similarly, the range of services is broad, allowing for maximum effectiveness with the children receiving assistance. Supplemental services currently being provided include, but are not limited to:

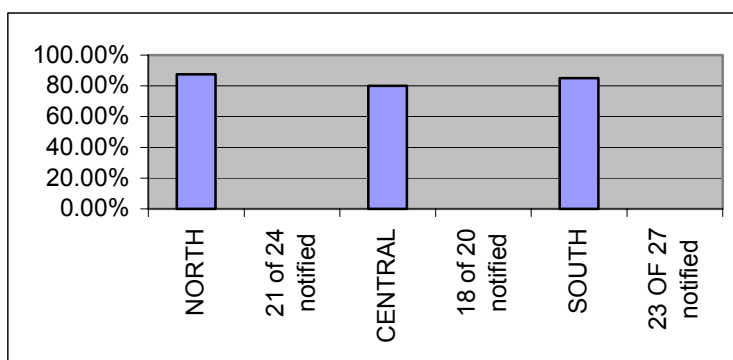
- before and after school programs;
- lunch time programs;
- one-on-one tutoring;
- teacher workshops;
- software programs;
- resource room and homework assistance;
- social services and guidance counseling, and
- Summer school programs.

The majority of districts currently implementing supplemental services appear to use a variety of methods in combination, which appears to indicate that LEAs are attempting to ensure that the most appropriate services are employed to best meet the needs of the students. A copy the summary of these services is attached.

Parental Notification: Survey Question #7: Were parents notified of school improvement status?

There has been a high level of compliance with parental notification requirements regarding school status. The remaining nine districts, or 13 percent, either had not notified parents of school status as of the survey date, or did not respond to this question on the survey. The compliance rate among these 71 districts again shows a clear recognition of the new federal mandate for parental notification set forth under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Parental Notification Statewide (87% of Districts)

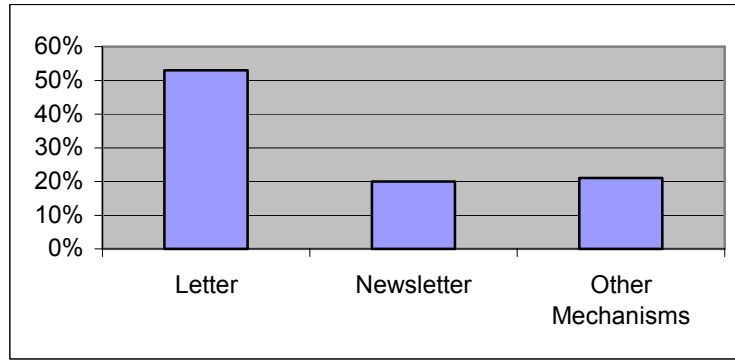


Of the 71 LEAs in the state with schools in need of improvement, 62, or 87 percent of the total, indicated that they had notified parents of the status of schools that were in need of improvement (Category I schools).

Methods of Notification: Survey Question #8: How were parents notified (letter, flyer, newsletter, newspaper notice or other)?

Multiple methods were available for LEAs to use in notifying parents of school improvement status and school choice options, including, but not limited to: letters, newspapers, newsletters, and flyers. Findings indicate that LEAs/schools preferred to take the most direct approach to parental notification: a letter sent to the parent's home to provide the greatest assurance of parental awareness of options available for their children. A total of 53 percent of the respondents indicated the use of this method. The second and third methods of preference, 20 percent and 21 percent, respectively, were newsletter announcements and other communication mechanisms. Nineteen LEAs, or 27 percent of the total LEAs with schools in need of improvement, indicated that they used two or more different methods of notification. This proactive approach on the part of LEAs indicates a good faith effort to ensure appropriate opportunities for parental awareness of their options for their children's education.

Methods of Notification



Timing of Notification: Survey Question #9: What was the actual or anticipated date of notification to parents.

Findings indicate that LEAs/schools attempted to release notices to parents at times optimal for parent consideration of the options available for their children. The majority of districts notified parents of school status in the months of June, 2002 (18 percent), August, 2002 (26 percent) and September, 2002 (23 percent) -the ending and beginning of a school year when parents would be most attentive to school issues. The remaining districts notified parents at various other times during the summer and/or school year. Six districts indicated that they notified parents at two different intervals.

NORTHERN REGION (24 LEAs): BERGEN, ESSEX, HUDSON, PASSAIC, WARREN

General: There are a total of 305 schools in the northern region's 24 LEAs:

- 237 elementary schools
- 30 middle schools
- 38 high schools

Of the total 305 schools, 136, or 45 percent, are Category I schools. (There was a 100 percent response rate from LEAs in the northern region.)

<i>Number of Schools in Region</i>	<i>Category I Schools</i>
305	136 or 45%

Transfers: In the northern region districts, there appears to be a focus on moving students out of lower performing schools at the earliest grade levels. In this regard, the majority of the transfers granted were for elementary school students, representing 97 percent of the total requests granted. A total of 410 transfer requests from parents were received by nine LEAs, or 37.5 percent of the total LEAs within the northern region, as of September 30, 2002: 396 for elementary schools; 10 for middle schools; and 4 for high schools. Of the total 410 requests, 107, or 26 percent, were granted.

Transfers

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Transfer Requests	395	10	4
Transfers Granted	107 out of 410 = 26%		

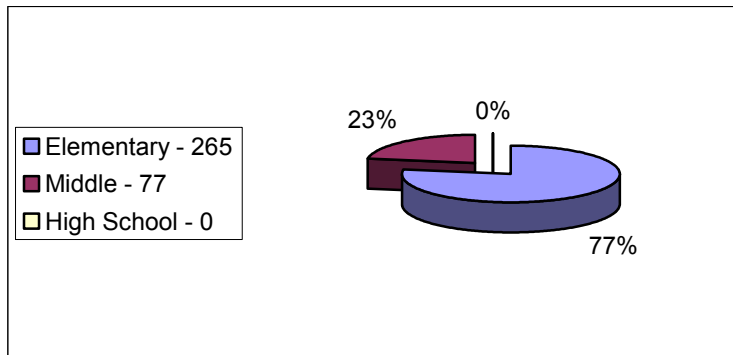
School Capacity: Survey results indicate a proactive approach by northern region LEAs/schools to addressing school choice issues. Twenty-one districts, or 87.5 percent of the total number of districts in the northern region, indicated that they are undertaking activities to identify school capacity. "Zero" capacity was indicated in a significant number of LEA responses: 10 districts indicated no capacity within elementary schools; 11 indicated no capacity within middle schools; and nine districts indicated no capacity within high schools.

Supplemental Services: Consistent with the findings for transfer requests, there appears to have been more of a focus on developing and maintaining additional educational services for students at the earliest grade levels. A total of 342 requests were made for supplemental services from among the 24 LEAs of the northern region, 265 requests, or 77.5 percent of the total, were made for elementary school students, and middle school students (77 requests, or 22.5 percent of the total); no requests were made for high school students.

Approximately 10 different methods/types of providers are used for supplemental services in northern region LEAs. Types of services offered include, but are not limited to: after school programs, ESL instruction, resource room and homework assistance, professional development

programs for staff and workshops for teachers, software, subject coaches, and tutoring and remedial instruction.

❖ *Supplemental Services Requests*



342 Total Requests

Parental Notification: There has been a high level of compliance with parental notification requirements regarding school improvement status. Of the 24 LEAs in the northern region required to provide notification to parents, 21, or 87.5 percent of the total, indicated that they had notified parents of the status of schools that were in need of improvement (Category I schools). The remaining 3 districts, or 12.5 percent of the total, had not notified parents of school status as of the survey date. These districts are being identified and will receive technical assistance from the department representatives.

Parental Notification

24 LEAs Total
21 sent = 87.5%
3 no (12.5%)

Methods of Notification: Numerous methods were available for LEAs to use in notifying parents of school improvement status and school choice options, including, but not limited to: letters, newspapers, newsletters, and flyers. Findings indicate that northern region LEAs/schools largely preferred to take the most direct approach to parental notification: a letter sent to the parent's home to provide the greatest assurance of parental awareness of school improvement status and school options available for their children. A total of 48 percent of the respondents indicated the use of this method. Only one respondent indicated notification via a newspaper announcement. Seven LEAs, or 29 percent of the total LEAs in the northern region, indicated that they used two or more different methods of notification. The department will provide technical assistance to those LEAs that have not yet provided notification to parents.

Methods of Notification

- Letter (48%)
- Newspaper (2%)

➤ Other mechanisms (50%)

Timing of Notification: Findings indicate that northern region LEAs/schools attempted to issue notices to parents at times optimal for parent consideration of the options available for their children. The majority of districts in the northern region (12 or 55 percent of the total) notified parents of school improvement status and school choice options in the months of June and September—the ending and beginning of the 2002-2003 school year when parents would be most attentive to school issues. The remaining districts notified parents at various other times during the summer and/or within two months of the start of the school year. Two districts, or eight percent of the total, indicated that they notified parents at two different intervals (June and September in both cases).

CENTRAL REGION (20 LEAs): MERCER, MIDDLESEX, MONMOUTH, SOMERSET, UNION

General: There are a total of 135 schools in the central region's 20 LEAs: 95 elementary schools; 25 middle schools; and 15 high schools. Of the total 135 schools, 68, or approximately 50 percent, are Category I schools. (There was a 100 percent response rate from LEAs in the central region.)

<i>Number of Schools in Region</i>	<i>Category I Schools</i>
135	68 or 50%

Transfers: The central region practices differ from those of the northern and southern regions on this issue. In the central region, there appears to be a focus on moving students out of lower performing schools at the upper grade levels. In this regard, the majority of the transfers granted were for high school students, representing 65 percent of the total requests granted. A total of 268 transfer requests from parents were received by four LEAs, or 20 percent of the total LEAs within the central region, as of September 30, 2002: 61 for elementary schools; 33 for middle schools; and 174 for high schools. Of the total 268 requests, 256, or 96 percent, were granted.

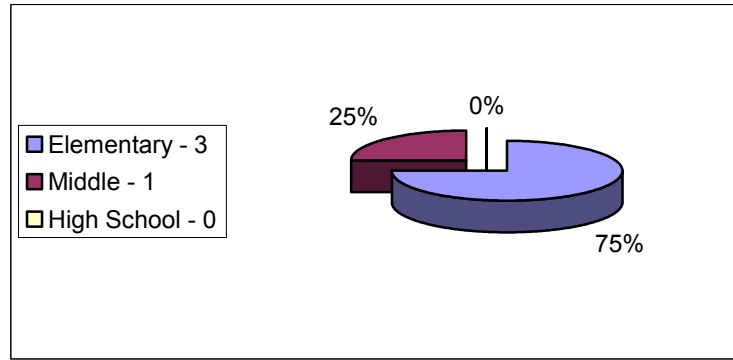
Transfers

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Transfer Requests	61	33	174
Transfers Granted	256 out of 268 or 96%		

School Capacity: Survey results indicate a proactive approach by central region LEAs/schools to addressing school choice issues. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the total number of districts in the central region, indicated that they are undertaking activities to identify school capacity. "Zero" capacity was indicated in a significant number of LEA responses: 12 districts indicated no capacity within elementary schools; nine indicated no capacity within middle schools; and nine districts indicated no capacity within high schools.

Supplemental Services: Responses received on this issue appear to indicate that the intra-district transfer was the preferred approach for students attending high schools in Category I status: there were no requests for supplemental services for students at the high school level, but the majority of transfer requests were from parents of high school students. A total of only four requests were made for supplemental services from among the 20 LEAs of the central region: three from elementary schools, and one from a middle school.

❖ *Supplemental Services Requests*



4 Total Requests

Approximately 16 different methods/types of providers are used for supplemental services in central region LEAs. Types of services offered include, but are not limited to: remedial instruction, before school programs, after school tutoring, lunch time programs, curriculum reorganization, Saturday tutoring, individual student assessment, special education services, testing, whole school reform models, computer programs, and summer school programs.

Parental Notification: Numerous methods were available for LEAs to use in notifying parents of school improvement status and school choice options, including, but not limited to: letters, newspapers, newsletters, and flyers. As reported for the northern and southern regions, there has been a high level of compliance with parental notification requirements regarding school improvement status. Of the 20 LEAs in the central region required to provide notification to parents, 18, or 80 percent of the total, indicated that they had notified parents of the status of schools that were in need of improvement (Category I schools). The remaining 2 districts, or 20 percent of the total, had not notified parents of school status as of the survey date. These districts are being identified and will receive technical assistance from the department representatives.

Parental Notification

20 LEAs Total
18 sent = 80%
2 no = 20%

Methods of Notification: Similar to the northern and southern regions, information from the central region indicates that LEAs/schools largely preferred to take the most direct approach to parental notification: a letter sent to the parent's home to provide the greatest assurance of parental awareness of school improvement status and school choice options available for their children. A total of 67 percent of the respondents indicated the use of this method. Other respondents indicated the use of newsletters and other methods of notification. Five LEAs, or 25 percent of the total LEAs in the central region, indicated that they used two or more different methods of notification. The department will provide technical assistance to those LEAs that have not yet provided notification to parents.

Methods of Notification

- Letter (67%)
- Other mechanisms (33%)

Timing of Notification: Findings indicate that central region LEAs/schools attempted to issue notices to parents at times optimal for parent consideration of the options available for their children. One-half of the districts in the central region notified parents of school improvement status and school choice options in the month August prior to the start of school when parents would be preparing their children for the 2002-2003 school year. The remaining districts notified parents at various other times during the summer and/or within two months of the start of the school year. One district indicated that it notified parents at two different times (July and August).

SOUTHERN REGION (27 LEAs): ATLANTIC, BURLINGTON, CAMDEN, CAPE MAY, CUMBERLAND, GLOUCESTER, SALEM

General: There are a total of 139 schools in the southern region's 27 LEAs: 95 elementary schools; 28 middle schools; and 16 high schools. Of the total 139 schools, 64, or 46 percent, are Category I schools. (There was a 96 percent response rate from LEAs in the southern region.)

<i>Number of Schools in Region</i>	<i>Category I Schools</i>
135	64 or 46%

Transfers: The information obtained from the southern region on this issue is similar to that which was report for LEAs/schools in the northern region. In the southern region, there appears to be a focus on moving students out of lower performing schools at the earliest grade levels. In this regard, the majority of the transfers granted were for elementary school students, representing 81.5 percent of the total requests granted. A total of 157 transfer requests were received from parents by eight LEAs, or 29 percent of the total LEAs within the southern region, as of September 30, 2002: 128 for elementary schools; 29 for middle schools; and none for the high schools. Of the total 157 requests, 141, or 90 percent, were granted.

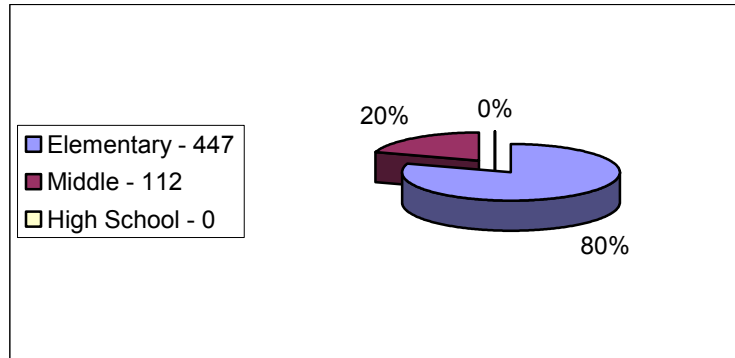
Transfers

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Transfer Requests	128	29	0
Transfers Granted	141 out of 157 or 90%		

School Capacity: Survey results indicate a proactive approach by southern region LEAs/schools to addressing school choice issues. Nearly half (48 percent) of the region's 27 districts indicated that they are undertaking activities to identify school capacity. "Zero" capacity was indicated in a significant number of LEA responses: 11 districts indicated no capacity within elementary schools; 14 indicated no capacity within middle schools; and 12 districts indicated no capacity within high schools.

Supplemental Services: Consistent with the findings for transfer requests, there appears to have been more of a developing and maintaining additional educational services for students at the earliest grade levels. A total of 559 requests were made for supplemental services from among the 27 LEAs of the central region. Of this total, 447 requests, or 80 percent, were made for elementary school students, and the remaining 112, or 20 percent, were made for middle school students; no requests were made for high school students.

❖ *Supplemental Services Request*



559 Total Requests

Approximately 14 different methods/types of providers are used for supplemental services in southern region LEAs. Types of services offered include, but are not limited to: subject area tutoring, basic skills tutoring, after school academy and summer school in all schools, whole school reform models, assistance for teachers, special education services, software, mentoring programs for students, technology programs, literacy programs, and homework center programs.

Parental Notification: There has been a high level of compliance with parental notification requirements regarding school improvement status. Of the 27 LEAs in the southern region required to provide notification to parents, 23, or 85 percent of the total, indicated that they had notified parents of the status of schools that were in need of improvement (Category I schools). The remaining 4 districts, or 15 percent of the total, indicated either that they had not notified parents of school status as of the survey date, or they did not respond to this question on the survey. These districts are being identified and will receive technical assistance from the department representatives.

Parental Notification

27 LEAs Total
23 sent = 85%
4 no = (15%)

Methods of Notification: Numerous methods were available for LEAs to use in notifying parents of school improvement status and school choice options, including, but not limited to: letters, newspapers, newsletters, and flyers. Findings indicate that southern region LEAs/schools preferred to take the most direct approach to parental notification: a letter sent to the parent's home to provide the greatest assurance of parental awareness of school improvement status and school choice options available for their children. A total of 47 percent of the respondents indicated the use of this method. The second favored method (30 percent) was use of a newsletter announcement. Seven LEAs, or 26 percent of the total LEAs in the southern region, indicated that they used two different methods of notification. The department will provide technical assistance to those LEAs that have not yet provided notification to parents.

Methods of Notification

- Letter (47%)
- Newsletter (30%)
- Other mechanisms (33%)

Timing of Notification: Findings indicate that southern region LEAs/schools attempted to issue notices to parents at times optimal for parent consideration of the options available for their children. The majority of districts in the southern region (7 or 29 percent of the total) notified parents of school improvement status and school choice options in the month of September—the beginning of 2002-2003 school year when parents would be most attentive to school issues. The remaining districts notified parents at various other times during the summer and/or within two months of the start of the school year. Three districts, or 11 percent of the total, indicated that they notified parents at two or more different times during the year.

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